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General Assembly

Official Records

Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

1452nd Meeting
Tuesday, 18 July 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Acting Chairman: Mr. Bangura . . . . . (Sierra Leone)

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Are there any further comments on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1836 and draft decision A/AC.109/L.1837?

Mr. Viswanathan (India): Before we consider the solution to our difficulty, I want to seek clarification from the Secretariat about the procedure should we have to postpone the discussion. For how long can we postpone it? What are the implications of doing so? This information would be useful for us as we consider the options I mentioned this morning.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Dmitrichev (Secretary of the Committee): Is the representative of India referring to postponement until September or postponement for a few days this week?

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I was referring to a postponement perhaps until next month, August, but before the conclusion of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Dmitrichev (Secretary of the Committee): As members are aware, the Committee is to resume its session either at the end of August or early in September in order to hear the report of the Chairman on his consultations with the Economic and Social Council on the work of the specialized agencies with regard to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Committee would thus be meeting anyway; members could combine that item with those that would be postponed if that were the decision of the Committee.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): It will take a long time to reach consensus on these two items, and I wonder how many meetings we will be able to hold during that period, or whether the situation will be much better than the present one.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Dmitrichev (Secretary of the Committee): Based on what happened in previous years, I believe that the Committee would have one or two meetings at its resumed session at the end of August or early in September. But this, of course, is up to the Committee to decide. Depending on the outcome of consultations, it may need more time. Then we would have to request more meetings for that purpose in order for the Committee to complete its work for this year before the beginning of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): The additional information requested by the representative of India is extremely useful as we consider what steps to take. Had we known earlier today that such an opportunity existed, we might perhaps have shortened our meeting. Let us take into account the reply of the

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Secretary as we determine exactly where we are going. For my part, I can see that if there were an agreement to defer, we could use this time for negotiations or consultations, or could even mandate the Chairman to use his good offices to create some sort of Friends of the Chairman, to which we would all have access to propose amendments or improvements or other measures to be taken to enable us to arrive at a consensus. Whether or not we need to vote on these texts will depend on our progress.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation considers the information just provided by the Secretary to be most important and useful. It gives us an opportunity for consultations permitting effective study of the situation with respect to these two draft texts. My delegation will do all it can to ensure that in the course of those consultations members of the Committee reach consensus on these issues, or at least make substantial progress towards consensus, so that at our resumed session we can adopt the documents. My delegation would request all members of the Committee to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded us by the rules of procedure to arrive at a common approach to these very important items.

As my delegation has already said, these are extremely important issues. We must not lose such opportunities to move the work of the Committee forward.

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): The information just supplied by the Secretary is indeed very useful and gives us some more time and flexibility to determine how to approach our work. I think there was reference this morning to the possibility of additional meetings, but I do not think that all delegations were paying such close attention. But there is no need for haste in adopting decisions when there is clearly a feeling among some of us that we need to work on these draft texts a little more closely. I am happy to hear that we may have more time at our disposal; I hope that most members will agree that we can use that time to work on these draft texts in an attempt to achieve some kind of consensus.

If we do not achieve consensus, the option to take a vote at some time towards the end of August will still be available to us.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Like other delegations, we have taken note of the information provided by the Secretary; I assure members that this morning we were aware of it. In our view, it does not really contribute anything new to the debate. In our view, solving the problem does not depend on how many extra meetings we have or on how soon we can resume our work. My delegation simply does not understand why we need to postpone the adoption of a draft resolution and a draft decision that are basic to our work, or why the fate of those texts should depend on the recommendations of a seminar, which cannot be viewed as guidelines for the work of the Special Committee.

We shall attentively follow this debate and, of course, we wish to be informed of how the decision we are taking will be formulated. The delegation of Cuba wishes it placed on record, however, that the entire Committee has decided merely to take note of the report of the Trinidad and Tobago seminar. In view of this, the Committee cannot endorse the report because there are many differences of opinion that raise questions about how we should proceed. Cuba therefore does not accept the idea that two basic documents of this Committee should be contingent on the results of that seminar.

At the appropriate time, we will keep these proposals in mind, but in no way can the recommendations of the Seminar be taken as directives for this Committee's work. It should therefore be clearly stated that the Committee simply takes note of the Seminar's recommendations. If necessary, my delegation will take part in subsequent consultations, but if we are going to meet in August we feel that we should resolve this matter at this session. I repeat that we are ready to take part in such consultations but without any commitment on the recommendations which were formulated at the Trinidad and Tobago seminar.

The Chairman: I want to assure the representative of Cuba that her suggestions are noted.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): My delegation will go along with the consensus view on this matter, but I wish to raise the question of the adequacy of the timing, whether there is enough time to enter a process of negotiation. We are assuming it may take one week, but if it takes longer and we do not resolve the problem, then what are the overall implications for any later consideration by the necessary United Nations organs?

The Chairman: I hope that the Committee will consider these implications before we reach our decision.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am sorry to be speaking again. Following upon the Secretariat's answer to my question about the time of the meetings, we

are aware that we usually have only one or two meetings in August. It is quite clear to everybody that we can no more reach a conclusion in one or two meetings than we can now.

What can we do? The subject is quite apparent to everybody. Anything that we might add to it in August or September, we can add right now. We have spent so many days without reaching a consensus on even the minor proposals that have been presented in recent days. I therefore believe that nothing will change in September and that we will be in the same position then as we are now. Thus, it would be better to take a decision now. I wish to reiterate once again my delegation's position on the proposal made today by our Indian colleague that we adopt the drafts before us and that any further discussion be held during the sessions of the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee, which can guide the Special Committee's work in its next session.

The Chairman: I have listened carefully to all the suggestions that have been made. It seems to me that there is a growing consensus for a deferment of the adoption of these two draft documents to September. That may well be the case, and if it is I presume that, between now and September, we will have sufficient time in which to consult. If that is the decision, I shall definitely try to hold consultations in the hope that, come September, we will have been able to come nearer to a position in which we can agree on texts which we will then be able to adopt.

But that is just my reading of the situation as it stands. As happened this morning, situations can change.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation fully supports such a reasonable approach. It seems to me that the recognition that we are not in a position to achieve consensus, no matter how hard we work, is radically inaccurate. We must first attempt to do so. I must say that we have not even tried to do so yet. Of course, bearing in mind the complexity of this question, time is needed, but our Committee has that opportunity now in the light of the information submitted to us by the Secretariat.

My delegation feels that we could use the time available to us to hold bilateral and multilateral consultations. My delegation is ready to work in any format and proceed in the interests of the Committee and the desire to achieve consensus. In my opinion, it is fundamentally inaccurate to say that we are unable to hold consultations now or to attempt to predict their outcome. I would tell my colleagues from Iran that God is great and we hope that we will manage to solve our problems with his assistance.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before taking or accepting a final decision on this matter, I would ask you, Sir, to reassure my delegation for the record that the negotiating exercise to be held before our next session — be it in August or September — will not be informal.

When I say "informal", I am referring to the fact that my delegation is ready to participate flexibly and objectively in any consultations. We are not prepared, however, to sacrifice the two draft documents which, for very specific reasons, have not been adopted at this session, nor to submit them to eleventh-hour consultations or to consider informal papers circulating behind the scenes. Any substantative negotiations to be held on these two draft documents will be held in official meetings of this Committee, and if it should become necessary to initiate informal consultations, these will have to be held so as to allow a substantive negotiation in which all interested delegations can participate.

We have been flexible, but, as I have already said, we cannot allow these two draft documents to be treated as they have been treated, nor will we discuss them in informal proceedings that do not allow for substantive negotiation.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): The more I listen, the more confused I get. I get the sinking feeling that we are drifting back to the position from which we started.

The Committee has been put in this predicament not by choice, but by circumstances that it did not create. I may be wrong, but I cannot help feeling that we would not achieve much by postponing action for further consultations and discussions, given the divergence of view, not only on the substance of the draft resolution and the draft decision but also on issues fundamentally about the Committee and issues that go far beyond the drafts. I feel that, even after consultations, we might not achieve something to which everyone agreed, something on which there was consensus.

As the representative of Cuba pointed out, the seminar in Trinidad and Tobago has produced new ideas and fresh approaches. However, I think we should give ourselves more time to digest these before the Fourth Committee meets in September. Given the fact that the

two corresponding actions of last year were adopted overwhelmingly by the General Assembly and that there have been no significant developments affecting the substance of the two drafts since then, my considered suggestion is that it would be in the interests of the Committee to consider adopting the draft resolution and the draft decision without amendment.

If we start to go into the amendments, I cannot see the end of the exercise. Not even three or four meetings would be enough. And I believe that even consultation spanning another two or three weeks would not produce consensus.

It therefore seems that the best way out is for us to adopt the draft resolution and the draft decision. I am not aware of many suggestions for amendment or modification. It seems that a majority of the Committee's members would be content with the resolutions that were adopted last year. I urge you, Mr. Chairman, to take this into account. I agree that some of the aspects of the drafts need to be considered, but this could be done in the Fourth Committee later. If we start that exercise we shall not be able to complete it.

In any case, this Committee has already been forced to sacrifice time. We have been placed in this difficult situation. In these circumstances we must take a difficult decision, and the best course is to do so promptly. By postponing action we would be doing nothing for the cause of the Committee.

The Chairman: I want to issue an appeal and a challenge to all members as representatives gathered here in the service of the Committee. If deferment would be in the best interests of the Committee and of the peoples who are its rationale, let us all agree to defer until such time as we are able to proceed. But if that would not solve the problem, if we would only be prolonging the endless debate — and, from the point of view of representatives, doing so would not get us anywhere — I appeal for the adoption now of decisions that we can live with.

It is a difficult choice but one that we must make.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): The longer the debate goes on, the more mixed up my ideas become.

All along, my delegation was for the adoption of the draft resolution and the draft decision as they are. However, following some developments, especially this afternoon, I thought that we were making some kind of progress by which we would seek deferment of action on these issues — not postponement of the draft resolution and the draft decision. That is my understanding as of now.

My belief — and I am sure a head-count by the Secretariat would confirm this — is that this morning a majority of members favoured adoption of the drafts, leaving changes to be made by whatever procedures were available. Having listened to the representative of Cuba in particular, I thought that some of us were reaching the stage of saying, "Adoption would be the correct course. We have no problems with these drafts. We would like to have consensus. Consensus is well and good, but it is not the only way out. We would be prepared to have a vote."

But perhaps between now and August, or whenever we will be looking at issues relating to consultations with the Economic and Social Council, we could undertake that assurances would be given in respect of all the considerations, especially those raised by Cuba — assurances that nothing would be watered down or thrown out. We do not have to keep repeating ourselves. The draft resolution and the draft decision are very important, and they are not as controversial as some people suggest. We all agree that they are serious and important measures, so we have only to engage in genuine discussion and consultations that will not minimize their importance.

I am amenable to our deferring action — not postponing the draft resolution and the draft decision — if that is acceptable. We are approaching a late stage and can be sure that these items will not just be thrown away.

With that, I hope that we can proceed.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation supports the proposal that has just been made by the representative of Tanzania and has been put forward by other delegations. In my view, the Committee would be making a big mistake if it were to base its approach simply on somebody's gut feeling when taking such an important decision.

As we have already said, we must start by working together on the draft texts; only through that process can we try to achieve some kind of mutual understanding. My delegation feels it would be a mistake for the Committee not even to try that approach. Once again,

then, we earnestly entreat our colleagues to take advantage of the opportunity before us today. We can try any format for our work, bearing in mind the approach suggested by the Cuban and other delegations. At the resumed session we could perhaps extend our work by one day in order to achieve a final decision. I ask members to remember that we can always resort to a vote; but the opportunity for serious consultations will not always be available. We could lose that chance without knowing whether we will have such an opportunity again in the foreseeable futu.e, for we all know that there will be no opportunity in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to discuss these draft texts in any detail: the volume of documentation to be got through is too great.

Here, on the other hand, are gathered members who have worked on these issues and know them well. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) is a far broader forum, where it will be much more difficult to discuss these issues — and even more so during the General Assembly session. We know from past experience that in the General Assembly it is just a question of voting. Why should we resort to a vote before having exhausted all other possibilities?

Again, we earnestly entreat members of the Committee to approach this issue seriously. Our view, like that of the Tanzanian delegation, is that we are not postponing the discussion to the distant future, certainly not forever. We are simply trying to create an opportunity for some additional input.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Without wishing to encroach upon your prerogatives, Sir, I should like to propose that we look at the two options you have set out: deferring the debate to the next session; or taking a decision on these two documents and passing them on to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for further consultations, as proposed by the representative of India.

With a view to helping in the adoption of a final decision and finishing this discussion, each delegation might state its preference between those two options so that we can get a clear idea of the Committee's final position. Otherwise, we will all be stating our individual views.

We think there are two clear options: either we adopt the two draft texts and pass them on to the Fourth Committee, as proposed by the representative of India, or we defer the discussion.

Perhaps, Sir, you could indicate what course the Committee should take.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is our duty to find a realistic solution to this problem. In my view such a solution would be in line with what has been proposed. If we want to amend the draft resolution and the draft decision, it should be with the intention of encouraging countries to cooperate with the Special Committee. If we do not succeed in establishing a relationship of cooperation with these countries, we can never reach our goals.

To me, the solution is clear and straightforward. As proposed by the representative of India, we should discuss the two draft texts, bearing in mind the concerns of the delegation of the Russian Federation. The Chairman had suggested holding consultations with administering Powers before taking a final decision. If those countries want to cooperate with the Committee, the Committee will be flexible and will accept changes — provided that cooperation continues. But if those countries refuse to cooperate with the Committee, why should we delay a decision on these texts? What would be the point?

After the tangible success that has been achieved in the past, we members of the Committee cannot start to change the mandate of the Committee when results are not achieved. We need to be flexible, but they need to be flexible as well, and to prove their good faith. Our work at this session has been very different from that of previous sessions; we have shown great flexibility, both during our meetings and outside them. I think that is sufficient: before we go any further we need to be very clear about our goals. There have been attacks on this Committee; there are many who would be delighted to terminate its mandate before it achieves its objectives.

In short, I support the proposal made by the representative of India.

The Chairman: Let me point out that when reference has been made to consultations, these have been consultations within the Committee. There has been no intention to consult with administering Powers, nor was any reference made to such consultations.

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): I support the position of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Russian Federation, because I think deferment would probably be the best course and would please most

members of the Committee at this time. We need to give ourselves more credit; if we have more time, we should use it to achieve consensus. We should not prejudge what the outcome of such consultations would be. I agree with the representative of Cuba that, if there are consultations, they should not be informal, but should be within some sort of formal structure, perhaps a working group in which we could work together to thrash out our differences. But I think we really should give ourselves some more time.

While my delegation has no problem with the substance of these texts, we do have a little problem with the language. As we have said, we should take the international political climate into consideration. We should make a realistic assessment of what the current international political climate is, and we should not be using cold-war language or the language of the 1960s or the 1970s. We should make an attempt to reflect the thinking of delegations, and, more important, the interests of the peoples themselves, whose interests we should really be addressing, and not so much the positions of members of the Committee.

Representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories presented their positions at the Trinidad and Tobago seminar. Clearly, the positions they presented are not all in keeping with resolutions the Committee has adopted. We should take into consideration the interests and feelings of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

After all, those are the interests that this Committee should be addressing. If we run ahead and take decisions based on our own positions, without thinking of the peoples themselves, I think that in a sense we might be changing our own mandate.

I believe that we should give ourselves some time to reflect the thinking of these Non-Self-Governing Territories — what their interests are, what does and does not please them, what the situation on the ground is, and so on. This information has to be reflected in the resolutions. We accept the same resolution from year to year without much change, but sometimes the changes could be minimal but subtle, and those should be reflected. We cannot assume that because no major changes have taken place, the resolution should remain the same. Even though the changes may be slight, to reflect them might be the beginning of some future development.

The Chairman: Before I proceed, permit me to summarize the discussions thus far. I take it that I am right and that, as I said earlier and as supported by the delegation of Cuba, it is now a question of determining whether to defer adoption of the drafts or to adopt them today. I appeal to representatives to address only these two issues. I think all the positions have been clearly stated, so representatives can help the Chair arrive at a consensus by addressing these two issues only.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I asked to speak, Sir, before you specified the issues we should decide, but I wish simply to make a clarification.

When we asked the Chairman to conduct consultations, we did not mean that they should be conducted among members of this Committee. The positions of the countries represented in this Committee are well-known, and if some simple amendments are submitted by Committee members who do not vote against the draft resolution, then this is not a matter that requires consultations. The Chairman should consult with other States, not members of the Committee, as our positions are clearly defined. Some States require to make radical changes, which others would not accept.

The purpose of the consultations with non-members of the Committee is to change the result of the voting in the Fourth Committee. We have to work as one unit. Our goal is to support and consolidate the work of this Committee and to interact with other States, not to minimize the differences between us. Our positions are well-known, as is our voting record, and I hope that we can consider this question very carefully. We do not need any consultations among the member States of this Committee, all of which have expressed their views here or in consultation with other States before the session of the General Assembly. Our debate should reflect this.

The Chairman: If there were no need for consultations, I am sure that this meeting would have ended a long time ago. The fact that we are being held up by the two remaining issues after reaching consensus on all the others means that there does exist a need for consultations within the membership of the Committee. Had we been able to agree, this meeting would certainly be over by now.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): Mr. Chairman, you have asked us to state our position on the issues before the Committee.

Having heard the views of other delegations, Papua New Guinea will go along with the suggestion made by the representative of Tanzania. Technically, he is

recommending that we defer taking action on the two drafts, which is very important. We would also raise the question of adequacy of time. As there seems to be time for consultations, we would be in favour of them so that we can study the drafts. If any amendments are proposed, I think they should be properly and adequately discussed before we take action.

Early on, we said that we would go with the consensus. But there does not seem to be one, and since the Chairman asked each one of us to state our position, I have given ours. We will go along with the deferment in order to have the time to go through the language. This language suits my delegation, if we look at it from our perspective. On the questions of military presence and foreign economic dominance, we will go along with the drafts, but we are aware of the fact that other Territories have a different point of view and that their perceptions and realities must be taken into consideration. This is very critical, given the practical situation and the particular nature of those Territories. We are aware also of the situation of Gibraltar, which may take a different position, and of the situation of the Falklands, which will have yet another stand. Due to their circumstances, New Caledonia and Guam would support the draft resolution before us. On that understanding, I am in favour of allowing time for consultations.

The Chairman: The representative of Papua New Guinea supports the suggestion, made earlier by the representative of Tanzania, to defer action, but not to postpone consultations, on the draft resolution.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): With regard to the draft decision and the draft resolution before us, the Chinese delegation is willing to join the consensus. We have no difficulty with regard to the draft resolution proposed by the Chairman, but since the Russian delegation and others would like to postpone taking action on it, we support this deferment.

I should like also to know how late this deferment can be. If the Secretariat says that we can wait until next week, then we would like to hear and consider the views of those delegations that have different positions. However, if we cannot reach a consensus but can still have the option of voting, we would like to defer taking action.

The Chairman: If I understand correctly the representative of China, she is in favour of deferring action but not of postponing consultations.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): As my delegation stated earlier, we have no problem with either of the two drafts in question. But some difficulties do arise if it is a question of a straight choice between adoption and deferment; I would then choose adoption. I think that in the interest of everything we have been saying here, we could allow time for consultations so that we can defer taking action on these issues until we are ready to do so. Yes, we do want consensus, but that does not rule out voting. We are neither here nor there.

The Chairman: My understanding of the position of the representative of Tanzania is that he is sticking to his initial position of deferment of action but not postponement of adoption. Is that correct?

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): Provided that the vote is not about —

The Chairman: Let us not talk of votes at this stage.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As our debates proceed, my conviction strengthens that your decisions, or your interpretations, are sometimes very timely. Perhaps that is even more the case in the light of what the representative of Tanzania has just said in his request. Regrettably, this does not change Cuba's position. There are two options, and the one that we favour is adoption of the draft resolution and the draft decision.

The Chairman: The representative of Cuba is in favour of adoption.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation too is in favour of adoption. However, as English is not my mother tongue, I wish to seek clarification.

I do not know the exact difference between deferring action and postponing adoption, and I should like to be quite clear about it.

The Chairman: What is intended is that the draft resolution and the draft decision be adopted in principle but that their implementation be held in abeyance until such time as members of the Committee have agreed definitively that they may go into effect — that is, allowing an opportunity for consideration of the various amendments for which we do not have time now.

I hope that my interpretation captures the essence, at least, of what members intend. Does it help?

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): So we are going to adopt the draft resolution and the draft decision?

The Chairman: If that is the consensus, yes. I am just gathering the views of members. What is the position of the representative of Iran?

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation is in favour of adopting the drafts that are before the Committee.

Mr. During (Sierra Leone): My delegation is also in favour of adoption.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: I should like to have a point clarified. The Chinese delegation has no problem with the draft resolution and the draft decision, but deferment of their implementation would take account of the wishes of those delegations who believe that consultations are necessary. If my understanding is correct, the other possibilities are adoption by consensus or adoption by voting.

The Chinese delegation agrees that action should be deferred. Several delegations have indicated that they need some time for consultations, and the delegation of the Russian Federation has said that time is required for the clarification of its proposals and amendments. Whether those proposals are acceptable to other delegations is another matter, but at least there would be time for them to be made. The Committee could meet again after consultations, or we could have informal consultations, but if the consultations did not produce consensus the draft resolution and the draft decision could be voted upon.

If my understanding of deferment is correct, the Chinese delegation is willing to have action deferred. However, there should be a time limit — probably the end of this week or some time next week. There should not be an indefinite delay.

The Chairman: The comments of the representative of China give us an opportunity for clarification. May I interpret?

The draft resolution and the draft decision are accepted in principle, but action is deferred. If consultations are successful, implementation will take place, subject to the time limit agreed. Otherwise, as was suggested by the representative of China, the drafts should be put to the vote.

Is that correct?

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: That is correct.

Mr. Viswanathan (Indonesia): My delegation too can go along with the draft resolution and the draft decision. We have supported corresponding drafts in the past, and we are prepared to support what is before the Committee now.

However, as you, Mr. Chairman, have put two options to the Committee, I should like to repeat that our preference is to have the Committee's work completed today. The drafts could be adopted on the understanding that, if necessary, we could return to them.

The Chairman: It seems that we have reached consensus that the drafts be adopted rather than postponed, but that action on them be deferred.

Mr. Ratunaceva (Fiji): My delegation wishes to join the consensus on deferment of action. We do not have any problem with regard to the draft resolution and the draft decision.

The Chairman: It seems that my interpretation is correct.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I wonder whether the question raised by the representative of the People's Republic of China has been adequately answered.

Our understanding is that the purpose of deferring action is to allow time for negotiation and that, in the event of failure to reach agreement, we shall consider voting or otherwise resolving the matter. Is our understanding correct?

In your summing up of the situation, Mr. Chairman, you have said that the drafts will be adopted in principle until such time as negotiation produces some compromise.

I am not sure about the position now. We need proper clarity on the question raised by the representative of the People's Republic of China.

The Chairman: I believe the representative of China agrees with me when I say that the draft resolution and the draft decision should be adopted in principle, but that if the Committee so agrees, action should be deferred until such time as negotiations conclusively and definitively prove that there is general agreement on those points.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): With regard to the question put forward by the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea, I should like to raise the same question. That is to say, if we are going to defer, how long will we defer until we finish and can take action?

The Chairman: The question now is, what is the wish of representatives? How much time do they need or want? It is my task to get a sense of what representatives wish and transmit it, so at least we know that what we agree on is what everybody wishes.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I have a small suggestion. If we could suspend the meeting for about five minutes or so, we could have consultations and I think then we would be able to respond to the Chairman's question.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I acknowledge the point raised by the representative of India, but I believe we can take a decision now. I think that the time limit should be set around August; this would provide enough time for us to consult each other on the matter and take action before the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): From the point of view of our delegation, the best possible time frame would be the time before our resumed session, since in any case we will have a session of the Committee at which we will consider the questions related to cooperation with the specialized agencies of the United Nations. Before that, we have sufficient time to carry out consultations and endeavour, as we have already said, to work out a text acceptable to all.

The Chairman: If that is the wish of representatives, we will therefore adjourn for five minutes.

The meeting was suspended at 5.05 p.m. and resumed at 5.20 p.m.

The Chairman: I request the representative of Papua New Guinea to communicate the outcome of the consultations.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): Most representatives think that we should defer taking action on the two drafts before the Committee. This deferment would give Committee members time to consult with each other on any proposed amendments. If any amendments are accepted by consensus, a new version of the draft resolution will be submitted to the Committee. If no consensus is achieved on the amendments, however, then the Committee will reconvene to consider the proposals now before it for its consideration. That is my general understanding of the position of most Committee members.

Representatives would like also a definitive time frame, and they believe at least a week is needed for the consultations to be conducted. It has been proposed also that these consultations be open-ended so that all representatives can participate.

The Chairman: My attention has been drawn to a technical matter — that instead of the word "defer", we should say "postpone".

Are there any comments on the outcome of the consultations?

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I shall be very brief. Our interpretation of the technical meaning of not taking action at a specific time on a draft text corresponds exactly to the one put forward by the representative of Papua New Guinea.

As we have before us two drafts, we feel that one week — two at the most — would give us ample time to hold consultations. That is why we should decide specifically when our meeting will be held, and this should be no later than the first week of August.

If we do not reach agreement or consensus on certain amendments — and we reiterate that the text of the two drafts before us constitutes the basis for our negotiations — then we would be meeting only to take a decision on those two drafts.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I understand that the Committee will meet at the end of July or the beginning of August. I have a question: if we do not have the quorum to meet at that time, when will we meet? It has been difficult enough to hold a Committee meeting this month because of the lack of a quorum, so if we take into account the fact that in August most of the representatives probably will be

elsewhere, then what is the solution? How do we deal with that?

The Chairman: I hope that Committee members will address the question posed by the representative of Syria.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): This interpretation of the compromise, as outlined by the representative of Papua New Guinea, is in principle acceptable to us. We understand it in very simple terms, namely that on the substance of the matter we postpone taking a decision on the draft texts in order to allow time for additional consultations. That is a step in the right direction, and I think all delegations will endeavour to make the most of that opportunity.

As I understand it, the representative of Papua New Guinea is saying that if we do not achieve consensus in the process of consultations, then automatically we would revert to the old draft, which would then be put to the vote. In principle, we agree with that also, because, as we have no other draft, that situation would be identical to the one we have today. But at least we would have time to hold consultations.

I do not believe that it will be difficult to have a quorum in August, since by that time either consensus will have been achieved or a vote will simply be taken. For such highly qualified diplomats, this will not require much work. This can be done also by qualified people in the missions, so I do not think there will be a quorum problem, because there should be at least one diplomat left in each mission at that time; none of them will be left completely unattended.

Hence, mustering a quorum should not present a major problem. But I would like to ask delegations to take a realistic approach to establishing a time frame. These are complex questions; there are 24 members of the Committee, all of whom must be consulted, perhaps more than once, which will take some time. My delegation urges members to take that into account in establishing when we are to take a decision on the draft texts. As representatives have rightly stressed, this should be no later than our resumed session, but not too long before it, to give us at least three weeks for consultations. From the standpoint of principle there is little difference between three weeks and two, but from the practical point of view it affects the consultations, as members have extensive obligations other than their work in the Committee; it would be desirable to have as much time as possible so that the consultations are not carried out in haste but are painstaking and detailed.

The Chairman: Once again, I appeal to members to be brief and to the point, given the limited time we have at our disposal.

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): I just wanted some clarification with respect to the question of the quorum, which is a concern of mine. I recall that when we first spoke of having an open-ended working group the Secretariat informed us that there was no need for a quorum in such a group. Perhaps the Committee could establish an open-ended working group; I am sure that interested delegations would make it their business to attend, so that we could come up with some kind of revised draft texts. That would eliminate the need for a quorum.

The Chairman: I call on the Director of the General Assembly Affairs Division.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly Affairs Division): I have just returned from a meeting of such a working group. The membership of an open-ended working group is variable, so we are never sure how many will attend a given meeting. But of course the purpose of a working group is to prepare a decision for a body, and during the discussions in the working group, with the participation of the various geographical groups and so forth, it is possible to see when a decision is close to consensus for the entire membership. So when the decision goes to the full committee, the members are more or less sure that there is something like general support for that decision.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): When we talk about quorums, we are not worried about the quorum in the open-ended working group; we are concerned with the quorum in the meeting in which we adopt the draft texts. If we lack sufficient members, then we will be in a more difficult situation than the present one. That is the concern that was expressed by the representative of Syria. I think one way to deal with this problem might be to fix a date now on which we are going to meet to adopt the draft texts so that people can plan to attend the meeting.

Our colleague from the Russian Federation suggested that there was no difference between two weeks and three; I would prefer two weeks. If we could meet by 1 August, assuming the availability of services, we could fix that date now, planning for two meetings in case we need them. If it is clear that the purpose will be

adoption only, not discussion, then we could plan for one meeting. But let us decide on the date now.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am happy that we are reaching consensus on procedure; I appreciate the efforts of the Chairman and our other colleagues. I think that the suggestion regarding the two-week period and making clear the exact date of our meeting would be helpful to ensure a quorum. At least everybody who is at the meeting will participate. I just wanted to clarify one thing. When we resume, will we have the two draft texts before us and another that is the object of consensus, or only the two current draft texts? If there is going to be a vote, it would be on these two texts, not on anything issuing from the consultations. The result of the consultations can be only a consensus.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I think the representative of India may have slightly misunderstood me. What I meant was that there was no difference between two weeks and three as regards the adoption of a resolution. But as far as consultations is concerned, there is quite a big difference. My delegation would like there to be a reasonable period, bearing in mind the views of other members. Given the issues that need to be discussed, we really think that a little more time would be appropriate.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Let me echo the statement of the representative of Iran: if there is no consensus text — which should be based on the two draft texts before us now — we would be meeting to take action on the present draft resolution and draft decision.

In our view we have been involved since Friday in negotiating under pressure, and we have been flexible. We have two draft texts; many delegations have said they can accept them. Now we are being asked for more time — more than is necessary — for consultations. My delegation considers that two weeks is enough. We would be willing to accept the first few days of August as the date of our next meeting.

The Chairman: The majority view seems to be that we should reconvene in two weeks.

So, depending on the availability of services, a meeting should be held during the first week of August at a date to be confirmed.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): I have been consulting with the representative of Syria concerning the question of a quorum. While the Secretariat is looking for the exact date on which to hold consultations during the second half of August it might be convenient to hold the formal meeting during the first week of September when almost everybody will be available.

The Chairman: A new dimension has been added. If no other representative wishes to speak, may I take it that the Committee agrees to the suggestion of the representative of Tanzania?

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation prefers that we adhere to the consensus we reached on holding the meeting during the first week of August and we believe we will have a quorum. However, if we find we do not, and since we have to hold a meeting, we could discuss the matter at that time. But we have fixed 1 August as the date for the meeting.

The Chairman: It does not seem that at this point we can confirm the first week in August because that seems to be the busiest period. I do not feel that a week will make a difference. We need conference services, and if they cannot be guaranteed during the first week of August I would suggest that we opt for the second week.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): We are flexible, depending upon the facilities available.

Before we conclude today's discussions, I should like to propose an amendment to the Subcommittee's report even though the report has been adopted. There is a factual inaccuracy in the matter of the United States Virgin Islands. It is only a factual point, not a value judgement. Clarification of this information was presented during the Trinidad and Tobago seminar and I mentioned it during one of my interventions in the Committee's meetings. If you will permit me, I should like to propose a small amendment.

The Chairman: If it is question of fact, and since it does not really affect the substance of the report, would the Committee agree that the change be communicated to the Secretariat? Of course, the Committee should also be informed as to what the change is. I wish to avoid the slight possibility that that would open the door for more debate, however, since what is presented as a fact can easily be interpreted as a value judgement. Therefore, if it is simply a correction of a fact I would suggest that the representative of India convey that to the Secretariat to be taken care of.

I thank the representative of India for his understanding. The change will thus be issued in the form of a corrigendum.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): May we conclude this meeting with the certainty that our next meeting will take place in the second week of August?

The Chairman: The Secretariat is looking into possible dates and it seems that the second week is possible. When the date is confirmed we will inform the members of the Committee.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before we conclude the meeting, Cuba would like once again to point out that in a spirit of contributing to the work of the Committee and the smooth discharge of its mandate, we have been dealing with procedural issues for some days now, and have experienced some delay.

We believe the Secretariat should have drawn the attention of the Committee to the late submission of the two drafts now before us. As we have repeated on previous occasions, this has given rise to debates and has caused us to sacrifice the drafts despite our extreme flexibility. Even today, when we took the decision to postpone the debate on these two drafts to a later occasion, we still do not know, unfortunately, if conference services will be available for our meeting in August.

We would also like to point out, so that the Secretariat will take due note of the decisions taken by the Bureau of our Committee, that we would have liked to distribute to all members of the Committee document A/50/263, dated 29 June 1995. This document appears under item 121 of the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. In section III of the annex, our Committee puts forth a recommendation concerning the pattern of conferences under the heading "Letter from the Secretary of the Committee" — the Special Committee — which states the following:

> "The matter was raised at a Bureau meeting of the Committee on 30 January 1995 during which members unanimously agreed to maintain the practice of recorded meetings for the 1995 session, following the recommendation made by the Working Group contained in the report of the Special Committee adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session (A/49/23 (Part I)).
>
> "At the same meeting, the members of the Bureau also decided to review the question again in 1996." (*A/50/263, Annex, section III*)

In addition, the report of our Working Group recommended the retention of verbatim records.

Of course, the delegation of Cuba respects the right of any delegation to submit an opinion. However, if we are concerned about the credibility of our Committee, then when some member of this Committee overlooks a fact, the Secretariat or the party concerned should continue to abide by the decisions that are taken and that are officially submitted to the competent organs of the Organization.

The Chairman: Let me unreservedly apologize for any difficulties that have arisen as a result of the unanticipated transition. I want to assure members that I will make every effort to ensure that we do all that is possible to serve the interests of the Committee and those peoples whose interests are under consideration here, as we hold the fort until next year. Whatever difficulties we may have had, I hope members will continue to show understanding and tolerance.

Except for the items relating to the specialized agencies, foreign economic interests and military activities, the Committee has concluded its consideration of the items on the agenda. The next meeting of the Committee will be announced in the *Journal*.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Given that we have finished the work of our Committee, I should like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for the considerable efforts which you have been coordinating in order to achieve consensus at this stage. I should also like to thank the Secretariat for the work it has done. We can see from their faces how tired they are, because they, too, have put a considerable amount of effort into this work.

It is true that there are still differences of opinion about the work of this Committee, and this is perfectly normal. Such things happen. But our goal is to keep moving forward, and it is our hope that future meetings will be easier than the one we have just had.

In view of your wisdom and your very capable coordination of the work, Sir, we are sure that future meetings will be a resounding success.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to add my voice to the words which have just been spoken by the representative of Syria. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): Mr. Chairman, I should like to echo the sentiments expressed by the representatives of Syria and the Russian Federation, and to add my compliments for your efforts and your leadership in guiding the proceedings of this Committee to their conclusion. I wish you all the best in the discharge of your responsibilities for the remainder of the session.

Mr. During (Sierra Leone): I would be failing in my duty not to add a word to what my colleagues have just said.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have postponed the resolution of two issues until August, I wish to extend to you, Sir, the deep gratitude of the Sierra Leone delegation for the very competent manner in which you have conducted these proceedings. As a Sierra Leonian, I am very proud. I wish you luck in all your endeavours.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I should like to join other delegations in thanking you, Sir, for accepting, in this difficult time, the duties of Acting Chairman and for exercising your wisdom in guiding the work of this Committee.

I should also like to thank the ladies and gentlemen of the Secretariat. We know that since the seminar in Port of Spain they have been working very hard. We would like to thank the technicians and verbatim reporters and others who have assisted us in our work.

In addition, I should like to appeal to all the members of the Committee to carry out consultations before the start of the next meeting so that the spirit of consensus can prevail. We hope that we can achieve success in the consultation process.

The Chairman: I call on Mr. Perfiliev.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly Affairs Division): We shall do our best to continue providing the Committee with all its working papers on time. I think that has been the case for this session, not only for this Committee but also for the Subcommittee on Small Territories.

As for the draft documents, we shall continue to provide all the support material needed by the Chairman or delegations, but we shall of course expect the prompt presentation of the drafts by the delegations themselves — by one delegation or a group of delegations — after which we shall expect some other delegations perhaps to be added to the list of sponsors, so that these drafts can be ready on time in all languages for the Committee's sessions. As for any draft resolution which the Chairman himself might prefer to submit, as I said, we shall of course try to help him with all the support material, but it will be his responsibility, as usual, to initiate such a draft resolution.

We shall do our best to service the Committee as well as possible and to continue to respond very promptly to any suggestions from members of the Committee, especially from the Chairman and the Bureau.

The Chairman: I thank delegations for their kind words addressed to me.

In conclusion, I wish on behalf of the Committee and my own personal behalf to extend our profound appreciation to the interpreters for a job very well done. We thank them very much and appreciate their efforts, tolerance and patience, which we hope that they will be able to extend to us in the future.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/AC.109/PV.1453

General Assembly

Official Records

Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

1453rd Meeting

Wednesday, 16 August 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Bangura ..... (Sierra Leone)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: Let me first of all welcome representatives most heartily, in the hope and expectation that our deliberations this morning will take place with honesty, openness and dedication and with an awareness that it is important that we realize we are here to take action, not to reopen the debate.

Members will recall that before we adjourned the Committee's last meeting, on 18 July, it was decided that we would meet in mid-August to take action on the three pending items on our agenda.

Activities of foreign economic and other interests which impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/AC.109/L.1836) *(continued)*

The Chairman: Does any member wish to comment on the draft resolution in document A/AC.109/L.1836, which was submitted by the Acting Chairman.

Ms. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): My delegation has submitted some amendments to draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1836 to members of the Special Committee for their consideration. We hope this draft resolution, as amended, will be adopted by consensus. In our initial discussions there has been some agreement on some of the amendments, but it is of course open to the members of the Committee to discuss the text and to reach agreement by consensus.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation has also submitted amendments to this draft resolution. During the discussions we had with various members of the Committee, it became clear that, at least at this stage in the Committee's work, these amendments did not enjoy the support of the majority of delegations. Unfortunately, our proposal to hold consultations among members of the Committee before today's meeting with a view to seeking agreement also yielded no results — although, in spite of the fact that, so far as I know, a number of delegations did favour holding such consultations.

In these circumstances, my delegation feels that the amendments proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago should be considered. My delegation is prepared to support them for inclusion in the draft resolution. We deem them to be minor but still a step in the right direction, and hope they can serve as a point of departure for giving deeper and more comprehensive consideration to our draft resolution in the future.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I am sure that all my colleagues in the Committee, having enjoyed half of their vacation and having had time to go over these amendments, have come here with the determination to complete our work today. We all know each other's position, so we should concentrate solely on adopting the three draft resolutions before us.

In connection with the item now before us, I would suggest that we go over the draft resolution in document A/AC.109/L.1836 paragraph by paragraph. Through this discussion, we would see where the amendments

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This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

proposed by the Russian Federation and Trinidad and Tobago could fit in. I believe that that course of action would facilitate the conclusion of our work today.

The Chairman: I had the impression from the contribution of the representative of the Russian Federation that it was merely a question of integrating the amendments put forward by Trinidad and Tobago into the draft resolution before us, and that we would not have to go through the text paragraph by paragraph again. I think the amendments proposed by Trinidad and Tobago are quite helpful, with their new sixth, seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs, their new language for operative paragraph 4 and so forth. If it is agreeable to members, these could simply integrated into the draft resolution, which, if I have understood correctly, the Russian Federation would accept with the proviso that there would be a more profound consideration of this item in the future.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We agree entirely with the comments made about the conduct of our consultations and of our work at today's meeting. We do not think there is any need to consider the draft resolution paragraph by paragraph; it was agreed at our last meeting that the period before the resumption of the session would give delegations interested in proposing amendments time to get together with other delegations to produce an integrated text for today's meeting.

Given that it was understood at our last meeting that we would meet today to take action on these draft resolutions and not to get involved in debating amendments or going through the texts paragraph by paragraph, all we should do is state our views on the amendments — copies of which have only just been given to us. On the basis of a quick reading, my delegation would be prepared to show flexibility by agreeing that they should be incorporated into the draft resolution.

We see merit in the amendments relating to the sixth, seventh and eighth preambular paragraphs, because they are pragmatic; we believe they could be incorporated into the draft resolution. With respect to operative paragraph 4, the Cuban delegation agrees with other delegations that the word "Condemns", which has been the subject of discussion in the Committee, might be somewhat inappropriate in the present circumstances. But we believe that the proposed wording "Reiterates its concerns about" is insufficient and does not accurately reflect what the Committee wishes to say in this paragraph. We could accept the wording with the addition of an adjective to modify "concerns", such as "deep" or "strong".

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The amendments proposed by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago reflect the views expressed by Committee members at previous meetings. With respect to operative paragraph 4, we feel that replacing the word "condemns" would mark a great step forward. A number of delegations that have voted against or abstained on similar draft resolutions in the past would be willing to change their votes if we did not "condemn" the activities of foreign economic and other interests.

The new eighth preambular paragraph sheds an entirely different light on foreign economic activities and shows that the Committee is working in a serious-minded manner and is being flexible. By encouraging the parties to cooperate with the Committee, we would leave the door open for the future.

We support the proposed amendments, because they reflect the work of the Committee at this session and I think they will help us make progress next session. I do not think it necessary to examine the text paragraph by paragraph. I think that your proposal, Sir, to integrate the amendments into the draft resolution is a good one, as I think all delegations are in agreement on the proposed amendments. We certainly support them. Indeed, this draft resolution has already been discussed in the Committee.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation supports the amendments proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago and, like the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic, agrees to the incorporation of these amendments into the draft resolution.

Ms. MacKenna (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation supports your procedural proposal, Sir, that we should not consider the draft resolution paragraph by paragraph but should incorporate the proposed amendments into the existing text. Moreover, we support all the amendments proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago in their entirety; we think they clearly reflect earlier discussions in the Committee.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): Having listened to other representatives and to you, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to go along with the procedure you have proposed. My delegation supports the amendments suggested by Trinidad and Tobago, and the further amendment offered

by Cuba. Indeed, these amendments have the support of all delegations.

The Chairman: The reservation expressed by the representative of Cuba relates to operative paragraph 4, in which she proposes that an adjective be added to modify the word "concerns". Would this be acceptable to the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago?

Ms. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): I accept the recommendation made by the delegation of Cuba. I suggest the adjective "deep".

The Chairman: There seems to be no objection to that wording. The word "Condemns" would thus be replaced by the wording "Reiterates its deep concerns about".

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation can also go along with the previous speakers on the integration of the amendments proposed by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the draft resolution, including the amendment to operative paragraph 4, the first words of which will now read: "Reiterates its deep concern".

It is my hope that after including these amendments we can have a consensus on this draft resolution. My question is whether we are indeed going to adopt the draft resolution by consensus or in some other way.

The Chairman: I felt that the atmosphere was such that once we had integrated the amendments proposed by Trinidad and Tobago the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation has already stated its support for the amendments introduced by Trinidad and Tobago. Unfortunately, we have taken a step backwards from the original text as a result of the latest amendment to operative paragraph 4. I am saying this just so it will be on the record.

However, while supporting the inclusion of these elements into the text, my delegation feels that this modest step in the right direction is clearly not enough to make it possible for us to agree to the text as a whole.

While we welcome the progress made in amending the text, my delegation will none the less request that the draft resolution be put to a vote.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): With the permission of the representative of Iran, I would like to tell him frankly that for a moment I thought he had introduced a discordant note into the debate by asking whether this negotiation would result in a consensus or in some other solution, because it seemed to us that the prevailing spirit was a constructive one. Now I no longer think so, and I wish to tell him that he was right even before the fact.

If it is the position of the representative of Russia to request a vote, even with the amendments proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, the delegation of Cuba requests that it be allowed to retract the flexibility it manifested by supporting the amendments introduced by Trinidad and Tobago and that we return to the starting-point and the initial decision. If we are going to vote, we shall vote on the Chairman's draft resolution, without amendments.

The Chairman: I was hoping that we would not get back into this unfortunate situation.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I wish to appeal to my friend and colleague from the Russian Federation to reconsider his decision. We know the position of the Russian Federation is that last year's resolutions needed improvement. We have not been able to go as far as he wanted us to, but there have certainly been significant improvements. In particular, the amendment proposed for paragraph 4 is a significant departure. The new addition to the eighth paragraph of the preamble, recognizing the usefulness of foreign investment, is also a very significant departure from this Committee's past positions. Considering these significant departures from past resolutions, I want to appeal to the representative of the Russian Federation to kindly think about reconsidering, because his purpose has been achieved. The recent improvement is significant.

The Chairman: I honestly felt I had sensed some magnanimity on the part of the representative of the Russian Federation. He drew attention to the concerns of his delegation, and they were taken on board and are reflected in the amendments we have before us. He went a step further and said he hoped that in future we would take a deeper and more comprehensive look at our draft resolutions. I thought that this would allow us time, between now and next year, to consider the thrust of the Russian Federation's position.

I would therefore repeat the appeals that have been made to the representative of the Russian Federation to allow us to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, in the usual manner. He can of course state his country's position afterwards.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation notes with great satisfaction that the work of this Committee is guided by the desire to arrive at a consensus. It is perfectly clear that a draft resolution such as this one, even with the amendments introduced, cannot be adopted by consensus, in the true meaning of the word. The best we could do would be to envisage adopting it without a vote.

The Committee knows that there is a difference between adoption by consensus and adoption without a vote. My delegation would like to ask the representative of Cuba to reconsider her proposal relating to operative paragraph 4, with a view to going back to the wording originally proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago. In that case, my delegation, prompted by the desire to cooperate, will accept the adoption of the draft resolution without a vote. It goes without saying that our position on the draft resolution as a whole will be reflected in our statement in explanation of vote.

Let me say once again that a number of members of the Committee attending this meeting have expressed their intention subsequently to work in greater depth on the text of the draft resolution, with a view to adapting it to the prevailing spirit and to the work that this Committee is called upon to accomplish.

The Chairman: I wonder whether including the word "deep" is of such moment as to affect the position of the Russian Federation. I appeal to the delegations of both the Russian Federation and Cuba: we have made such progress that it would be a great pity if the proceedings of this meeting were held up because of the single word "deep".

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are trying to take a pragmatic approach in the procedural game in which others are trying to involve us. We have constantly tried to accommodate the position of a single delegation, even though the facts and arguments placed before the Committee do not deserve such consideration. The position expressed by delegations here indicate majority support for the amendments proposed by Trinidad and Tobago. This reflects in a pragmatic way the true state of affairs. Surely, no one would claim that in two short days the Committee should change its entire mandate and the facts and review its entire approach just to accommodate one delegation.

The representative of the Russian Federation has said that even if we withdrew the word "deep" the draft resolution could not be adopted by consensus. So what would be his proposal if we did withdraw the word "deep"? That the draft resolution should be put to the vote, or should be adopted without a vote?

The Chairman: Let me express the hope that we will be guided in our deliberations, first and foremost, by a commitment to our mandate and to the interests of the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): At our meetings, and in general, I try to avoid controversial discussions with other members. But I want to draw the attention of delegations, and in particular the delegation of Cuba, to the fact that this amendment was not proposed by the delegation of the Russian Federation. It was introduced by Trinidad and Tobago and, as I understand it, broadly reflects the views of members of the Committee. I want also to point out that, throughout our consideration of this question and of the situation in certain specific Non-Self-Governing Territories, never once did I hear anything that reflected "deep concerns" on this matter.

We have carefully studied all the documents prepared by the secretariat and the results of the seminar held in Trinidad and Tobago, and in our view there is no reason to exaggerate the true situation or to depart from objective facts. That is why my delegation requests that we be precise in the wording of our draft resolution.

Moreover, the amendment proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago does indeed change something: it is not correct to assert, as Cuba asserts, that it changes nothing in our work. In a spirit of cooperation and with the wish that the Committee's work should become more effective and more balanced, so as to respond genuinely to the interests of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, my delegation stated that it was prepared to make a major concession: we agreed that the draft resolution should not be put to the vote.

In that light, we request that the Committee return to the text of the amendment as originally proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is important to the work of the Committee that we achieve consensus and avoid resort to voting. It is true that a few delegations hold positions different from those of the rest; they have expressed their views. We must bear in mind that the amendments accepted by delegations are substantive and important. If the representative of the Russian Federation can accept adoption of the draft resolution by consensus without the inclusion of the word "deep" in paragraph 4, I would expect the delegation of Cuba not to insist on the inclusion of that word.

To achieve consensus and protect the work of the Committee, we should omit the word "deep". Taking a vote would not be consistent with the spirit of the Committee. If the representative of the Russian Federation can accept adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, we would be willing to see the word "deep" dropped.

The Chairman: We are at a point where the wonderful work we have done and the optimism I had at the beginning — and my gratitude to Trinidad and Tobago for its assistance — are in jeopardy. Of course, I can appreciate the positions of delegations. But the representative of Syria has suggested that, if the Russian Federation is willing to accept the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus, there would be an inclination to allow the word "deep" to fall by the wayside.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I wish to support the suggestion made by the Syrian representative because it provides grounds for a compromise if we want to adopt the draft resolution by consensus. I therefore join in his appeal to the delegations of Cuba and the Russian Federation, because it takes their concerns into account. If they could accommodate us in the spirit of give and take, we could make progress.

The Chairman: May I appeal to the representative of the Russian Federation in the perceived spirit of compromise to accept the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus with the concession that we forgo the word "deep". In the same vein, I appeal to Cuba to accept the new amendment.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I am sorry to have to return to this item, but my delegation cannot agree to the adoption of this draft resolution by consensus.

My delegation is prepared to accommodate the Chairman and the members of the Committee by having this draft resolution with the proposed amendments adopted without a vote. If the delegation of Cuba insists on the word "deep" we will agree to it, but, as I stated earlier, we reserve the right to state our position on the draft resolution as a whole in a statement following its adoption.

The Chairman: May I take it that the Committee adopts the draft resolution, as amended, without a vote?

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We would be grateful if you could be more explicit, Sir, as to which amendments we are adopting without a vote with the draft resolution.

The Chairman: I believe that these are the amendments suggested initially by Trinidad and Tobago and the minor amendment added by Cuba. It is on that basis that I understand we can adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

May I take it that the Committee adopts draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1836, as amended, without a vote?

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1836, as amended, was adopted.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation for an explanation of position.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution which has just been adopted without a vote.

Although, as we have already emphasized, we believe that amendments introduced by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago are a step in the right direction, we feel that this is simply the point of departure for a great deal of work. In our delegation's opinion, serious further work is required on the text of the resolution, including those amendments which we submitted earlier.

Unfortunately, — I would even say with deep regret — we note that the text in its current form, even taking the amendments into account, to a great degree merely repeats the hopeless language of the 1960s. It thereby disregards the real state of affairs today and the major changes that have taken place in the decolonization process itself and in the lives of those peoples which

remain in the few Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in the international community as a whole.

In our delegation's view, many provisions of the resolution, to which we have repeatedly drawn members' attention, contradict objective reality and threaten the basic interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories — interests which the Committee was established and exists today to protect. Many of these provisions do not do credit to the Committee. In fact, they weaken its authority and cast doubt on its will to work constructively and effectively to carry out its mandate.

The Russian delegation will strive in future to ensure that amendments reflecting the real state of affairs are added to the text adopted by us today. We call upon members of the Committee to work constructively in that direction. We hope that our appeal will not go unheeded.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that our delegation took the decision to support the adoption of this resolution without a vote only in the hope that changes for the better would be made in the future. If we had had no such hope, we would undoubtedly have cast a clear vote against the resolution.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): I am glad that you, Sir, are still chairing this resumed session, after the very useful work we did earlier. I came in late but I have no regrets. I agree with whatever has gone on. I have to thank you a great deal for having managed to get the members of the Committee to reach the stage we are at.

I do not wish to go back into a long history. Tanzania's position on these matters is very, very clear. I think we have been as steadfast as the other members of the Committee. We are here and we will remain here to work with the other members of the Committee and Members of the United Nations to arrive at an acceptable resolution of the problems of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Now that we are making progress — and a lot of work has gone into it, even to arriving at this resolution, which you, Sir, so gracefully presented — I am reminded of this Committee's resolutions pertaining to the question of apartheid. While we were all agreed that apartheid was evil, just as today we are agreed that colonialism is evil, the perceptions of what is evil and what is not and how to remove the evil have always been the problem. What I am saying is this: now that we are making progress, I think that the decolonization process need not be held ransom to the thinking of any particular Member State.

As the Chairman stated very clearly earlier, we have to take into account the mandate of the Committee of 24 and the thinking of the colonized peoples themselves. The leading problem of this Committee has always been — try as it might — to get correct information from Non-Self-Governing Territories and from the administering Powers. We get constant reports from armchair journalists who do not even go to these Territories but have the temerity to speak — for whom I do not know. But, most important, there cannot be sincere progress in this Committee until the situation on the ground is clearly known to the Committee and the international community and until all the Members of the United Nations shoulder the full responsibility to play their part.

I say this only to emphasize the work ahead and to say that what has been accomplished should not be belittled. It has been great — even tremendous. These Territories are on this list not because the Committee willed it so but because there is every reason to have them there. I can only thank the representatives who have spoken this morning and the Chairman and the secretariat. If this is the kind of spirit in which we are to proceed, we shall go very far. I have seen the largest possible majority agree to the amendments which were very kindly provided by Trinidad and Tobago. Let us therefore see if, in the future, we can proceed in this spirit and speed up the end of colonialism as we know it.

The Chairman: The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of this item.

Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration (A/AC.109/L.1837) (*continued*)

The Chairman: Are there any comments on the draft decision in document A/AC.109/L.1837, which was submitted by the Acting Chairman?

Ms. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): On this draft decision, Trinidad and Tobago has also circulated a small amendment, which refers to the downsizing of military bases in some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the administering Powers. This information was taken from the Seminar that was held in Trinidad and Tobago. There was agreement by a large number of delegations on this question. Information to this effect was provided to us by the secretariat also.

I hope that this amendment will be taken in the spirit in which the previous amendments have been taken.

The Chairman: I trust that the impetus which the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago injected into the previous resolution will guide, govern and inspire us on the draft decision before us now.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I wish to express the support of our delegation for the amendment proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago. We feel that this amendment is necessary because in the operative part of our draft decision we call on the administering Powers to terminate military activities, eliminate bases and so on. Now, some of the administering Powers have already decided to close or downsize these bases. I think that it is incumbent upon us to take note of that. We therefore strongly support this amendment.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation also supports the amendment proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, but in this case I am afraid that we will be unable to support the adoption of the draft decision either without a vote or by consensus.

My delegation submitted amendments, which all the members of the Committee have had an opportunity to consider. Following consultations and an exchange of views, we take it that these amendments will not be taken into account by the Committee. The adoption of the draft decision on this item, even with the amendment submitted by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, is unacceptable to us. My delegation will therefore insist, as is its sovereign right, that a vote be taken on this draft decision.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Since action in our Committee, which has a limited membership, does not constitute the final stage of work on this draft decision — which remains to be addressed by the Fourth Committee and the General Assembly — it is not appropriate for us to resort to a vote. We can adopt the draft decision without a vote, and any delegation that has a reservation can place it on record. After that, a vote can be taken in the Fourth Committee. When we adopt a draft text, this does not imply total agreement. Reservations can be expressed by delegations. Voting should be reserved for the Fourth Committee.

As I said, there are a limited number of delegations here, and any delegation with reservations can vote on the text at a later stage. Perhaps the Russian Federation could state its reservations and reserve its right to vote on the text in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: Is the proposal made by the representative of Syria acceptable to the Russian Federation?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Unfortunately, the proposal made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic is not acceptable to my delegation, for a number of reasons. First of all, we cannot accept the text in its current form. Secondly, we cannot agree to its adoption without a vote because, in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and in the General Assembly, the question would arise of whether or not the decisions of the Special Committee of 24 reflect the views expressed by delegations in the Committee — and, more broadly, why the Committee exists and why we bother holding a session when we could just present our views in the General Assembly and other bodies.

In our view, the Special Committee was established for a specific purpose: to prepare and consider items; to engage in a healthy appraisal of the situation; and to make the appropriate recommendations to other United Nations bodies, including the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the General Assembly.

In the view of my delegation, the amendment proposed by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago is correct. We support it, but must note that it is insufficient to persuade us to agree to the compromise.

My delegation therefore asks you, Sir, to put the draft decision to the vote, and we reserve our right to speak in explanation of vote.

The Chairman: We shall now take action on the draft decision in document A/AC.109/L.1837, as amended by Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to seek a clarification: is the Committee to vote on this draft decision simply because the Russian Federation has said it would not go along any other procedure, or are we going to agree to the clear suggestion made by the representative of Syria that the process could continue in the Fourth Committee at the next General Assembly session?

I do not see a difference from the way we proceeded on the previous item, in the sense that the Russian Federation was given time to explain its position. Perhaps my request for clarification is my way of saying to the Russian Federation that there is very little difference between the action we took previously and the current one.

The Chairman: The position is that it seems that all delegations but that of the Russian Federation were agreeable to the adoption of draft decision A/AC.109/L.1837 as amended by Trinidad and Tobago. Since it is the position of the Russian Federation that a vote should be taken, I think that even though it is in a minority of one I am right that procedurally we have no alternative but to take a vote.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I wish once again to emphasize that my delegation is in favour of incorporating into the draft decision the amendment submitted by the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago. We request that the draft decision as a whole then be put to the vote.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to the vote on draft decision A/AC.109/L.1837 as amended by Trinidad and Tobago.

Draft decision A/AC.109/L.1837, as amended, was adopted by 11 votes to 1.

The Chairman: I shall now call on representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of the Russian Federation was obliged to vote against the draft decision submitted by the Acting Chairman of the Committee on decolonization, entitled "Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration". In our view, the text in its current form has lost all connection with the true state of affairs and is inadequate to fulfil the mandate of the Special Committee in the current circumstances.

The expression of such an archaic and confrontational spirit in this draft decision — whose key provisions were formulated nearly three decades ago — contradicts common sense and the objective facts, and casts doubt on the desire of the Special Committee to work constructively and effectively for the benefit of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. It thus does irreparable harm to the reputation and authority of the Committee.

To our great regret, this draft decision, like many provisions, to which I have already referred, in the draft resolution adopted by this Committee today, on foreign economic interests, essentially nullifies all the positive steps taken by the Committee with such great difficulty in its work this year.

In this connection, my delegation calls upon members of the Special Committee to give serious thought to why Bulgaria, a long-time member of this Committee, has already joined others in leaving the Committee or not participating in its work. My delegation believes that if the Special Committee continues to base itself on outmoded, archaic concepts and confrontational stereotypes, as it has done in the past, thus disregarding the real needs of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the Russian Federation will be forced to reconsider the level of its participation in the work of the Special Committee on decolonization.

This work is very important to us. As is well known, my country was one of the founders of the Special Committee. We were present at the very beginning of the struggle for decolonization and for the liberation of colonial and dependent Territories. To our great dismay, we see that the Committee is simply marking time in its work. On a number of issues, the Committee is neither making progress nor showing any desire to achieve substantive progress in its activities. If this trend continues — and evidence to that effect can be seen in the draft decision just adopted by the Committee — we will be forced to think about our next move.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation apologizes to the Chairman and the other members of this very active Special Committee for our late arrival. We wanted to be present, but we were held up by some very serious problems that had to be dealt with at the Mission.

None the less, I have been fortunate enough to arrive in time to give the Committee my delegation's view.

Mali wishes to go on record as being in favour of draft decision A/AC.109/L.1837, which we accept as amended by Trinidad and Tobago.

Mali, as the Committee knows, has always been a member of this Committee and has always sought to participate in the best possible way in its work. Hence,

we can only support the proposals put forward, because the existence of bases in the Territories in question is undeniably an obstacle to their full autonomy. In this age of growing democracy and respect for human rights, the celebration of which will form part of the upcoming commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, it is absolutely essential that the Member States still maintaining such bases understand that the full freedom and autonomy of the countries where the bases are located cannot be realized or safeguarded unless they are able to choose freely whether or not to accept the presence of the bases.

My delegation requests the relevant administering Powers, and all other States that have such bases or that in one way or another interfere in the internal problems of the countries where the bases are located, to make a genuine effort to ensure that, as envisaged by the United Nations, between now and the year 2000 all those bases are eliminated. This does not, of course, prevent countries and Territories from concluding various types of agreements for their defence and territorial security, but the presence of bases belonging to countries that are not of the region and that are not generally accepted by the population are a hindrance to the full exercise of their rights.

Hence, my delegation associates itself with the vote in favour of the draft decision, and, above all, we ask the administering Powers and all other countries having such bases to contribute genuinely to the Special Committee's efforts to find the most harmonious and prompt settlement possible of this question.

The Chairman: We have concluded our consideration of this agenda item.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

The Chairman: I should like to inform members that, in accordance with established practice, I participated in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council held at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva, in July 1995, where the Council discussed the item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations". The Council considered the item between 25 and 28 July. It had before it the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document E/1995/85, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on the question, contained in document A/50/212 and A/50/212/Add.1.

In my statement on the item, I apprised the members of the Economic and Social Council that the global process of decolonization had now entered its final stage and that the international community had established the goal to usher in the twenty-first century free of colonialism. That goal was endorsed by the General Assembly, which in 1988 launched the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000 and subsequently adopted the Plan of Action aimed at achieving that goal.

I informed the Council that this year, the year of the mid-term review of the Plan of Action, the Special Committee would undertake a profound and realistic examination of its tasks. I stressed that there are still some peoples that have not been able to exercise their rights to self-determination; that these peoples, essentially inhabitants of small island Territories, are confronted with unique problems; and that irrespective of their small size and population, limited resources and vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental hazards, the General Assembly, over the years, has upheld their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in full conformity with the United Nations Charter.

I emphasized that in adhering to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter the Special Committee realized that the sustained economic and social advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories was an essential prerequisite for the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In this context, I invited the members of the Council to review, together with the Special Committee, the important task of assisting the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve self-determination.

In recognizing the important contribution being made to the well-being of the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the administering Powers and specialized agencies — particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others — I reiterated the position of the Special Committee that there are a number of areas where such assistance could and should be improved, increased and

streamlined. Those areas include environment, natural-disaster mitigation, public health, education, alimentary self-sufficiency, fisheries and prevention of crime and illicit trafficking. I urged the specialized agencies and international institutions to review critical problems faced by the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in cooperation with the respective administering Powers, with the hope that such cooperation would contribute to the achievement of the sustained socio-economic advancement of the Territories. I also availed myself of the opportunity to convey the Special Committee's request that the administering Powers share their views and experience with the Territories, especially in the field of socio-economic development.

During the Council's consideration of the item, consultations were held with its members on the draft resolution with a view to enlisting their support for it. At that time, some members expressed their view that the draft resolution should have incorporated some changes. This view was clearly stated by the representative of the Russian Federation, who expressed the hope that in future the draft resolution on the item in question would be different. The draft resolution was adopted, with some changes, by a roll-call vote of 31 in favour to none against, with 20 abstentions.

In connection with the item under consideration, I wish to draw members' attention to the following documentation: the report of the Secretary-General, circulated in documents A/50/212 and A/50/212/Add.1; the report of the President of the Economic and Social Council on his consultations with the Chairman of the Special Committee, contained in document E/1995/85; the related report of the Acting Chairman of the Committee, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1838; and the draft resolution on the item, in document A/AC.109/L.1839, submitted by the Chairman and circulated on 14 August 1995.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the comprehensive information on how the discussion of this draft resolution proceeded in Geneva. I would like to ask whether we now intend to discuss this draft resolution and, if we are not going to do so right now, when we are going to discuss it.

The Chairman: What has happened in the past is that once the report has been made, as I have done, and the draft resolution is put before the Committee, then it is adopted. But if the representative of the Russian Federation wishes to introduce a new element, it is for the Committee to consider this.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): As the Chairman has already stated, my country's position on this draft resolution was expressed in Geneva. We believe that the draft resolution is in need of some further work. However, my delegation found it possible, bearing in mind that need for possible further work, to support the draft resolution and vote in favour of it in Geneva.

We would propose a few minor amendments that I trust will be acceptable to all members of the Committee. The first relates to operative paragraph 1. It would seem that here it would be better for us to use the following wording —

The Chairman: It may be helpful if I remind the representative of the Russian Federation that the Russian Federation voted in favour of this draft resolution in Geneva.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I have already referred to that circumstance. My country's delegation in Geneva did indeed vote in favour of the draft resolution. It also expressed the view that the draft resolution needed further work.

Our first amendment, purely technical in nature, relates to operative paragraph 1. It would seem appropriate for the sentence to read as follows:

> "Takes note of the report of its Chairman on his consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council, as well as of observations and suggestions arising therefrom".

There is one technical question about that proposal: should this paragraph refer to the Chairman, as it does now, or to the Acting Chairman?

My second amendment relates to paragraph 4. We think that the draft resolution's reference to the Security Council is superfluous, because under its mandate the Security Council does not deal with questions of self-determination and decolonization; under the Charter, the Security Council deals with questions of the maintenance of international peace and security. I note too that previous texts on this matter have made no reference to the Security Council.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I apologize for what may be a lack of knowledge of procedural matters, but I would appreciate it, Sir, if you could clearly explain the soundness and extent of the support this draft resolution received in Geneva, so that we can make appropriate comments on the procedural aspects of the amendments that have just been proposed.

I would also like to hear again the exact amendment to paragraph 1 proposed by the delegation of the Russian Federation.

The Chairman: The draft resolution was submitted in Geneva by me, as Acting Chairman of the Special Committee. I sought support for it through consultations; as I have reported, it was then adopted by a roll-call vote. My duty is to report back to this Committee, so that the draft resolution, submitted to and adopted by the Economic and Social Council, can be adopted by the Committee.

The amendment proposed by the Russian Federation would replace the words "and endorses the observations and suggestions arising therefrom" by the words "as well as observations and suggestions arising therefrom".

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are, of course, prepared to comment at length on the proposed amendments. But from the standpoint of procedure, Mr. Chairman, it is regrettable that, at this stage of our work, analysis and debate are being reopened on a text that, in good faith, you presented in Geneva to the Economic and Social Council on behalf of this Committee. We remember the discussions, the consultations and the manifold forms of information you provided to Committee members seeking support and views from members of the Committee with respect both to this draft resolution and to the statement you intended to make on it in Geneva. The delegation of Cuba is prepared to support and vote in favour of this draft resolution as you submitted it in Geneva and in keeping with the result of the vote. It should be adopted by the Committee without reopening the negotiation on it or reformulating it.

The Chairman: I appreciate the support that the representative of Cuba has voiced. At the same time, I hope she will understand that it is within the competence of this Committee to do what has been suggested by the delegation of the Russian Federation, as much as members might regret it. That is why the Chair is admitting these proposals as put forward by the Russian Federation. It is for the remaining members to react to any proposals put before us.

Mr. Mwambulukutu (United Republic of Tanzania): Let me add to the comments of the previous speaker and, first, to affirm my delegation's position, Sir, that you represented us extremely well in Geneva as Acting Chairman. I also want to confirm that you took steps to consult fully on this matter with delegations that happened to be in Geneva; we participated fully, and like other delegations we support these views.

As for the procedural aspects, I am at a loss — either through ignorance or through a difference in my understanding of the matter. I tend to agree with the position of Cuba: Here is a draft resolution that was voted upon in Geneva. I do not see how we can open up this text at this stage and start to make amendments, perhaps in anticipation of further consultations in the Economic and Social Council on the same issue. It is something else to comment on the results from Geneva.

We should look into the implications of amending a text that was legitimately endorsed in Geneva.

The Chairman: I think the point made by the representative of Tanzania is valid. Let us look at it this way: The Committee, as represented by the Chair, presented a draft resolution in Geneva and held consultations on all its aspects. The draft resolution was adopted. It is now before us in report form. Are we now to take it to pieces? The implications must be carefully considered. Would it not mean that in future, knowing this, the Economic and Social Council will say, "No, we are not going to touch this until the Committee has definitively come up with a draft resolution for us to consider"? We would be sending the message that it was only as a matter of convenience that we transmitted a draft resolution to Geneva, that there was no commitment on the part of the Committee. Let us please consider that implication.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Mr. Chairman, your comments are very much to the point — although, to be sure, we should still discuss the draft resolution, even though it has been adopted elsewhere.

The representative of the Russian Federation proposes deleting the word "endorses" from paragraph 1. The Chairman went to Geneva to discuss all these issues with the President of the Economic and Social Council and with others; the views and ideas put forward by the President of that Council are reflected in the draft resolution. It is perfectly normal that in our draft

resolution we should express our support for the proposals and ideas that came out of these meetings. This is always done; it has no negative connotations. We would simply be saying that the Chairman went to Geneva, that certain ideas and suggestions were put forward, and that we support them.

With respect to removing the reference to the Security Council in paragraph 4, I should note that that Council plays an important role with respect to self-determination, as clearly indicated in the Charter. The Council's mandate is not solely to maintain international peace and security; it is also expected to involve itself in the self-determination of Territories that are not yet free. The Trusteeship Council is another organ involved in all these questions of self-determination; it too is to some extent accountable to the Security Council. In any event, the United Nations is seized of these matters through the Security Council; that Council plays a key role in everything to do with self-determination, and we believe that the reference to it should remain in the text.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): We agree with the concept that we must think very carefully and seriously about reopening consideration of a text already adopted by the Economic and Social Council. But, as we all know, this Committee was not established to rubber-stamp resolutions. I do not believe that any member would accept the role of simply taking note of resolutions adopted by other bodies, however highly respected those bodies may be. As the draft resolution has already been discussed in Geneva, and as, according to the Chairman's report he represented the interests of the Committee, we should of course be cautious. But, as I am sure members will have noted, my delegation's amendments are not radical; they are intended merely to reflect the situation.

On paragraph 4, I am still convinced that here a reference to the Security Council is simply inappropriate. It would be better to refer to the Trusteeship Council, which the representative of Syria has just mentioned. Let me also recall that our previous resolutions, including last year's, made no reference to the Security Council. The Security Council does not deal with questions of self-determination — although, to be sure, we could say that it deals with everything under the sun. Under the Charter of the United Nations, it deals with questions of international peace and security. Nothing in its Charter mandate refers to self-determination. The Trusteeship Council and then the Special Committee on decolonization were established specifically to deal with questions of self-determination. Hence, any reference to the Security Council is artificial and entirely superfluous and does not accord with the functions of that body.

With respect to our proposal on paragraph 1, we have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that you represent the interests of the Committee with dignity. I do not see that our proposed wording in any way diminishes your role. What we propose is a standard wording when referring to a United Nations body; we have often used it to react to events, documents and consultations in other forums and with reference to the Secretary-General. That the Committee would take note of the report of the Chairman on his consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council implies a kind of approval of the recommendations and proposals that emerged from those consultations.

I trust that the wording proposed by my delegation is adequate in terms of the issue we are discussing today.

The Chairman: It is on the basis of principle and procedure that we might wish to consider a situation such as this one, where a delegation seems to be taking two positions on one issue. As I reported, in Geneva the position of the Russian Federation was to go along with the draft resolution, some of whose paragraphs are being questioned now. The implications of this need to be considered in terms of principle as well as procedurally.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I agree with your position, Mr. Chairman. It is not just a matter of procedure; it is a matter of principle. I had thought that this was one of those draft resolutions that we could adopt without any difficulty at all, as it involves no contentious substantive issues. But since the Russian delegation has proposed two amendments, I shall address them now.

With respect to the second amendment, on deleting the reference to the Security Council in paragraph 4, I have no objection in principle; we would be saying "recognition by the General Assembly and other United Nations organs", so we would be missing nothing if we deleted the reference to the Security Council.

Regarding the first proposed amendment, which calls for taking note of the observations instead of endorsing them, my impression is that all the other members of the Committee endorse the observations and suggestions in the Chairman's report. I wish to seek clarification from the Russian delegation as to whether it

has any objections or reservations with regard to any particular observation on suggestion of the Acting Chairman. Since I have not heard any such objections or reservations from the Russian delegation, I wish to appeal to my colleague to consider going along with the word "endorses". I do not see any substantive issue of contention in what he has suggested. I think there is more than procedure and principle involved in this. It is also a matter of good tradition, since the Acting Chairman represented our Committee and the Russian delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Hence it would be fitting to endorse the observations and suggestions of the Chairman since there are no substantive reservations on this.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We wish first of all to recall our procedural observations in connection with the reopening of the debate on this draft resolution. However, in response to the Chairman's invitation we shall comment on the amendment proposed to paragraph 1.

We fully subscribe to the question just posed by the representative of India. It is our delegation's understanding that no timely objections were made before the Committee to the observations and suggestions contained in the report submitted by the Acting Chairman to the Economic and Social Council.

Secondly, in connection with operative paragraph 4, our delegation has no problem whatsoever with the reference to the Security Council, for two reasons.

In the first place, we believe that reference is being made to United Nations organs in a very general way. We are not talking about an explicit mandate for the Security Council in connection with decolonization. If my understanding of English is reliable, we are simply reaffirming the recognition of the legitimacy of the aspirations of peoples to self-determination. Normative precedents abound in which the Security Council has recognized the right to self-determination — for example, in addressing questions of peace and security in the Middle East and in other cases that need not be enumerated here.

In the second place, our delegation has a broad concept of international peace and security. We believe that there cannot be peace and security as long as peoples under foreign domination are deprived of their exercise of the right to self-determination. It therefore seems to us that the reference here is not at all out of place.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): We have to recognize the fact that this draft resolution is being discussed in the Committee for the first time. Hence, it is not surprising that questions might arise. Once again, I wish to emphasize that the amendments we have proposed are technical in nature and do not relate to principle.

My delegation supports the view already expressed here that singling out the Security Council in this context of "other United Nations organs" is inappropriate. The wording that is used covers all United Nations bodies, and singling out the Security Council here is not justified from any point of view. We therefore ask that the reference to the Security Council be deleted.

As for operative paragraph 1, in principle we have no problem. We have no objections to what was done by the Acting Chairman. We support his activities and we can fully support the word "endorses".

However, for the sake of accuracy, we would like to correct an error in paragraph 1. In our Committee there is no actual Chairman, but, rather, an Acting Chairman. So I would like to ask that we use the term "Acting Chairman", since it accurately reflects the current situation in our Committee. Otherwise, many questions may arise on this purely technical point.

I think that we can now agree on the insertion of "Acting" before "Chairman" in paragraph 1 and the deletion of "Security Council" from paragraph 4. Our delegation would then be prepared to support this draft resolution.

The Chairman: As to the question of the designation of the Chairman, document A/AC.109/L.1839 is entitled "Draft resolution submitted by the Acting Chairman". I myself raised this issue, and I was told that once it had been indicated that the draft resolution had been submitted by the Acting Chairman, then the use of "Chairman" was just a generic reference and that it was unnecessary to specify "Acting Chairman" again. But if it is still the wish of the Russian Federation, we can continue to say "Acting Chairman".

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for accuracy. If it is accuracy we want, we should retain the reference to the Security Council. In Chapter XI of the Charter, "Declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories" — Articles

73 and 74 — reference is made to the responsibilities of the administering Powers. Why not then also refer to the Security Council? If there are two Articles on the Security Council, and a separate Chapter relating to the subject with which our Committee deals, then why not refer to that? If we want accuracy, we have to stick to the Charter, and if in the Charter there is an explicit reference to our Committee and to the Territories, then why should we drop the reference to the Security Council? The Charter has not been amended yet. It is true that States have changed their positions, but the Charter is still the same as it has always been.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): With regard to paragraph 4, since we have already referred to "other United Nations organs", I tend to agree that we could just delete the word Security Council, because it is included in the reference to "other United Nations organs".

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I have taken a careful look at Article 73 of the Charter and have found no reference to the Security Council. The Article addresses the duties of administering Powers and has nothing to do with the Security Council, which is not an administering Power. At best, as I have already said, we could refer to the Trusteeship Council, but that of course is up to the members of the Committee. My delegation fully agrees with the statements of Indonesia and India that, inasmuch as we are making a direct reference to "other United Nations organs", in this case a reference to the Security Council would seem to make little sense.

Regarding paragraph 1, my concern arises from a very simple fact. The title of the draft resolution states that it is submitted by the Acting Chairman. Then paragraph 1 takes note of the report of the Chairman. To which Chairman does this refer? Is it the report of the previous Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Pursoo, or of the current, Acting Chairman? In order for us to be perfectly correct, I should like to add the word "Acting" which would make everything perfectly clear. My concern is only to avoid an ambiguous situation and any confusion. I think my view of this has been expressed clearly enough. I see no point in continuing the discussion further on such an obvious and simple matter.

The Chairman: May I take it that throughout the document under discussion we will add the word "Acting" before the word "Chairman"?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: May I also take it that the Russian Federation is agreeable to leaving paragraph 1 as it is — apart from the addition of the word "Acting"?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Yes.

The Chairman: May I take it that we can delete the phrase "Security Council", since it gives no offence?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: May I therefore take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1839, as orally amended, without a vote.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1839, as orally amended, was adopted.

The Chairman: The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of all the substantive items on its agenda.

Closing statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: Now that the work of the Special Committee for 1995, is coming to an end, allow me to say that it has been an honour and a privilege for me to have presided over the meetings during the months of July and August of this year. The responsibility which was reposed in me following the sudden departure of the Chairman came as a great challenge for me, and I trust that whatever difficulties have arisen will be attributed to this unexpected development.

Having been placed in an uncharted position, I wish first to thank all members for their understanding, assistance and cooperation, which made it possible for me to carry out the responsibility of Chairman with no notice and insufficient preparation. Their dedicated efforts have contributed immensely to whatever I have accomplished in the work of the Committee.

Aware of the unique issues and specific problems affecting the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories on the one hand and of the changing world situation on the other, the Committee has tried new ideas and approaches in reviewing the situation with regard to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. I can say for sure that members of the Committee have been, and I think still are, determined in their endeavour to rationalize the work for greater efficiency in order to best serve the interests

of the peoples of the Territories. At the same time, the members of the Committee have been and are more conciliatory and pragmatic, hoping to win the cooperation of the administering Powers in terms of their participation in the work of the Committee.

While appreciating information on the Territories provided by the administering Powers, the Committee would like the administering Powers as well as the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to participate in the work of the Committee. The Committee feels that it is imperative that its members be allowed to undertake visiting missions to the Territories in order to obtain first-hand information on those Territories. It goes without saying that with the cooperation of the administering Powers the task of the Committee would be greatly facilitated. We therefore urge the administering Powers to be more forthcoming in their cooperation with the Committee and its work.

We are almost at the half-way point of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which the United Nations is considering as the time-frame for completion of its efforts in favour of decolonization. These can bear fruit only through concrete actions based on proposals responding to the wishes of the peoples of those Territories regarding their future status.

In ensuring the successful attainment of the goals of the International Decade, and in accordance with the Plan of Action, the Committee will continue to carry out the tasks entrusted to it. To that end, and in the discharge of its mandate, the Committee will continue as in the past to conduct a thorough review of the issues on its agenda and to make appropriate recommendations with a view to revitalizing its work. I remain fully confident that our continuing efforts will yield the desired results.

Notwithstanding the many difficulties that confront the Committee, it should be noted that we have made some progress this year in amending the language of its resolutions. In most instances, the Committee has tried to avoid the rhetoric of the past so as to work in a spirit of consensus. I sincerely hope that this spirit will continue to prevail in the Committee and in the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, where the recommendations of the Special Committee will be considered.

As we are about to conclude our work, I would once again like to express my sincere gratitude to all the members of the Committee. Their cooperation and commitment have been particularly important in the carrying out of our common responsibilities. It was indeed an honour for me to preside over our deliberations during this brief period.

I would like to emphasize the support I received from the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, the Ambassador of Cuba, and his representative of course, and from the Rapporteur, Mr. Al-Attar of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express the Committee's appreciation for the cooperation of the administering Powers that participated in its work. I am also grateful to the specialized agencies that have provided information to the Committee. On behalf of the Committee, I should like to express my profound gratitude to the representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories who travelled a long way to apprise the Committee of the situation in their respective Territories. My thanks also go to the petitioners, who provided us with most valuable information.

I should also like to convey our appreciation to the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Ambassador Samana of Papua New Guinea, and the Rapporteur of the Subcommittee, Ms. MacKenna of Chile, and to the staff of the Secretariat — those with whom I have worked directly during this brief period and everybody else, including the interpreters, translators and members of the secretariat of the Special Committee.

Closing of the Special Committee meetings in 1995

The Chairman: I declare the 1995 session of the Special Committee concluded.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.